



Research

Research Sources pre-1914

The attached and linked document, “The International Socialist Women's Conference”, by Gerd Calleson, is from a Friedrich Ebert Foundation web site, in a section called “Sources on the Development of the Socialist International (1907-1919)”.

With some slight reservations, detailed below, it is not a major concern to us that this is a “Social Democratic” web site that holds to a different version of history than the communists, following Lenin, Luxemburg and others, do.

Our concern is to look for scholarly sources that may have researched the field, so that we may get indications of more empirical facts, and pick up references to more of the original sources. In the last part, we used what may be a Trotskyist article by Janine Booth, because Booth had researched the

material and gave some account of it.

In this summary by Gerd Calleson, it can be seen that there are further documents one could pursue, but overall, it supports the view that the documents we have used, from Engels, Zetkin, Kollontai and Luxemburg (and soon to come, Lenin), are indeed the crucial ones, which together give a good account of the state of affairs in the working women's movement and among the bourgeois feminists of the period from the beginning of the modern proletarian movement in the mid-nineteenth centuries, up to the split that took place in 1914.

Gerd Calleson does not deal directly with the split, but the whole title, including its reference to the "Socialist International (1907-1919)", appears to endorse the reformist view that nothing really happened in 1914, except that the communists somehow, inexplicably, left.

More to the point of our course, Calleson refers to "Zetkin's opinion that women workers were to be subsumed into the general Labour Movement". This is a one-sided opinion of Calleson's, about Zetkin, almost saying that Zetkin could not see working women as being a distinct mass, which is the opposite of the truth.

We have already seen in her own writings that Zetkin's opinion was not as Calleson states it here. Zetkin organised women. She organised International Women's day. She organised conferences of women, and she edited *Die*

Gleichheid.

The organising of women as a distinct mass, and the political unity of working women with working men, are not contradictory principles. This was exactly Zetkin's message.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The International Socialist Women's Conference, Callesen, 2006.](#)
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